

Hot Issue for Deputy Administrator Perciasepe

Status of EPA Activities in Dimock, PA

QUESTION: What is the status of EPA's investigation in Dimock?

ANSWER (as of March 13, 2012):

- EPA's January 19, 2012 removal action initiated under the response authorities of CERCLA included sampling of approximately sixty-one (61) residences. This number has increased to sixty-eight (68) residences for potential sampling based on EPA well surveys.
- Sixty-one (61) homes have been sampled to date;
- Alternate water continues to be provided to the four (4) residences initially identified as needing water (a fifth residence identified as needing water was provided water by Cabot at first, but has since declined water from anyone, including EPA);
- Sampling operations were suspended on February 15th and resumed on March 5th as there were several residents residing in other areas (e.g., wintering in Florida) that did not plan to return to the Dimock area until March or April. During this period analytical data were received, reviewed and evaluated;
- Four (4) additional residences remain to be scheduled (either are out of town or have not yet responded);
- To date there have not been any homes that have declined having their well water sampled. Scheduling continues in accordance with availability of residents.
- Additional actions, including any future sampling and/or provision of alternate water will depend on a review of the final sampling data;
- Data on the first week of sampling is anticipated to be provided to homeowners this week (week of March 12).

BACKGROUND: Based on information from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Cabot Oil & Gas, consultation with an EPA toxicologist and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and an EPA well survey, EPA determined that a number of homes in the Dimock area contained hazardous substances, some of which were not naturally occurring.

On January 19, 2012, using response authorities under CERCLA, EPA initiated a removal action at the Dimock Residential Groundwater Site in Dimock, PA. This action included provision of alternate water to four (4) residences and well water sampling at approximately sixty-one (61) residences. An EPA well survey increased the number of potential residential well samples to sixty-eight (68).

At Cabot's request, EPA met with representatives of the company on February 22, 2012. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) representatives participated in that meeting via conference call. EPA also held a conference call with PADEP on March 6, 2012, to discuss this issue as well as approaches to other situations where contamination of groundwater by natural gas activities is alleged.

Ron Borsellino 215-814-3170
Shawn Garvin 215-814-2900